

# The Saga of Mrs. Simpson

No. 1

## Early Childhood



Mrs. Wallis Simpson's mother was Miss Alys Montague. This Virginia family derived from the English Montagues, first mentioned in Norman times. At 18, Alys married Teackle Wallis Warfield, descendant of an old Baltimore family, first established in America in 1662. The Warfield line, too, extends back to 1066.



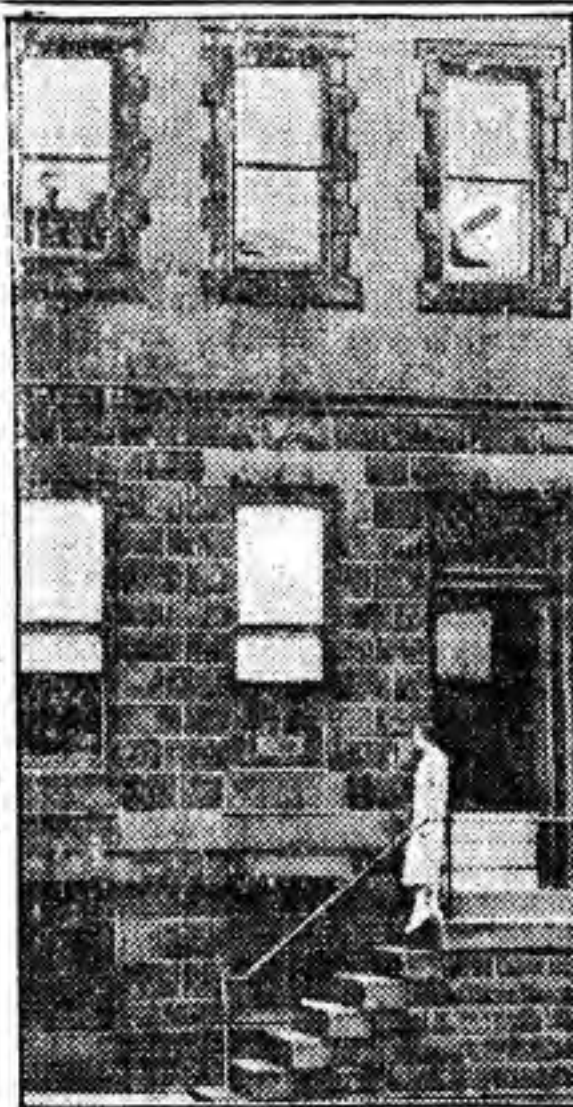
Soon after the marriage Mr. Warfield fell ill. In an effort to regain his health and to await the birth of a baby, the couple went to Blue Summit, Pa., in the Blue Ridge mountains. There Bessie Wallis Warfield was born in 1896. She was named after her aunt Bessie and her father, whose first name was Wallis.



Mr. Warfield was not strong and he died when merely 28, on Nov. 15, 1896. His death marked the tragic end of a lovely romance. While Mr. Warfield had brought an equally distinguished ancestral line to his wife, Alys, he left Mrs. Warfield with little money. The young widow and her infant daughter went to Baltimore.



Mrs. Warfield remained unmarried for 12 years. Following her husband's death she made her home, with her baby daughter, in the mansion of her mother-in-law, Mrs. Henry MacTier Warfield, in Baltimore. In 1906, determined to make her own way, she opened a tea room, which was much frequented by Baltimore society.



Income from her tea room enabled Mrs. Warfield to lease this house at No. 212 E. Biddle St.



Bessie went to several schools, among them Arundel school, Baltimore, which no longer exists. There she mingled with the children of the first families of the Severn and Potomac rivers. Bessie was helped generously by her uncle, "Sol" Warfield, who took a particular delight in aiding the independent spirit of Mrs. Warfield in such a manner.



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No. 2

# A Debutante



Wallis Warfield's mother married John Freeman Rasin, of an outstanding Baltimore family, in 1908, in the living room of the house on East Biddle street. Wallis, who already was pretty enough to have attracted a beau, was described in the newspapers as the "beautiful young daughter of the bride". She was only 12 at the time.



While her mother was away on her honeymoon, Wallis went to Washington during the summer vacation to visit her mother's cousin, Mrs. George Barnett, of Washington and Philadelphia society. The summer ended, Wallis returned to Arundel school, a private school in Baltimore. She had a childhood sweetheart who attended the school next door.



The world seemed bright for both Wallis and her mother in 1910 when the family of three went to Atlantic City for a vacation. They had been traveling considerably and had been socially active. But Mr. Rasin died suddenly in Atlantic City, transforming the vacation from sunshine to sorrow. Once again there was a sad return to Baltimore.



Photo of Wallis, in 1912, when she attended the exclusive Oldfield's school near Baltimore.



As Wallis' coming-out party approached, the World war already had begun. But the United States was not yet involved, and Baltimore social activities had not yet been curtailed. Debutantes were then being presented at a series of dances known as the Bachelor Cotillons. Wallis looked forward eagerly to her day of triumph.



On Dec. 7, 1914, Miss Bessie Wallis Warfield, slender, dark-haired, made her debut at the age of 18 at the Baltimore Lyric theater. The theater had been transformed into a tropical bower of beauty, light, color and warmth. Wallis appeared in a white satin dress with chiffon and pearl embroidery contrasting her dark beauty.



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No. 3

## Her First Marriage



Wallis Warfield, as a gay debutante, entered the social whirl with eagerness. She did all the dances of the day with the personable young men of her set. Her charm and her grace upon the dance floor were the envy and admiration of many. With perfect poise she performed some of the most awkward dances of the day.



In the winter season of 1916 Wallis visited her cousin, Mrs. Henry Muysteyn of Pensacola, Fla. Mrs. Muysteyn's husband was an instructor in a Pensacola aviation school. She enjoyed to the full the balls of the winter resort society group, which included the officers of the naval aviation school and their wives.



Beneath a romantic Florida moon, Wallis met a handsome young lieutenant in the U. S. aviation corps. He was Lieut. Earl Winfield Spencer, Jr., whose parents were prominent in Chicago social circles. He was seriously interested in aviation, but he found time to become seriously interested in the beautiful young girl from Baltimore.



Because of the contact Wallis' cousin had with the naval officers, Wallis had many engagements with the colleagues of the handsome lieutenant, but she soon found herself devoting most of her time to young Spencer, who had asked her to dance that first night under the romantic light of a beautiful southern moon.



On Sept. 16, 1916, Mrs. Warfield announced the engagement of Wallis and Lieutenant Spencer.



Wallis Warfield married the young lieutenant on Nov. 8, 1916, at Christ Episcopal church in Baltimore. The church was decorated with palms and white chrysanthemums. Wallis was a beautiful bride in her gown of white panne velvet. In leaving the church the couple passed beneath an arch of swords held by the bridegroom's comrades.



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No. 4

# Her First Divorce



Lieutenant Spencer and his bride, now Mrs. Wallis Warfield Spencer, returned to Pensacola, Fla., following their honeymoon, for the remainder of 1916. Mrs. Spencer's husband continued his duties at the naval aviation school, which included giving instruction in flying as well as flying a plane in formation with others.



In 1917 the Spencers began a roving existence that led them to San Diego, Cal.; Shanghai, Coronado, Cal., and Europe. (Photo of Mrs. Spencer in 1917.)



Travel and the exercise of her natural wit gave Mrs. Spencer the reputation of being a sophisticate. Wallis always was fond of entertainment, but her aviator husband refused to spend long hours at some gay soiree and then try to perform maneuvers with a plane the next day. More and more he stayed at home while Wallis sought recreation.



Finally the parting became inevitable. Wallis took up residence in Virginia. After one year at Warrenton, Va., she filed suit for divorce and obtained her decree in 1925. The case was not contested and was free of even the slightest suggestion of scandal. The grounds, upon which the divorce was obtained, were incompatibility.



At Warrenton, Mrs. Spencer met Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Simpson. Mrs. Simpson, the former Dorothea Parson Dechert, had married Ernest in 1923. He was the son of a wealthy shipping broker and had had a colorful career, including service in the Coldstream Guards of England. Soon after Wallis received her divorce decree, the Simpsons were divorced—in 1925.



Mr. and Mrs. Simpson had a daughter, Audrey, but custody of the child was given to Mrs. Dorothea Simpson. A year or two later, Wallis visited London with her aunt, Mrs. D. B. Merryman, of Washington, who more recently has been her chaperon in London. After a pleasant reunion with Ernest, Wallis returned to America in 1927.